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Indiana Department of Education The Science of Happiness: Online Course

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Conversation Starters

10 Minute

Professional Development

for IDOE's Optional *The Science of Happiness* Course

As a building leader, you are tasked with creating an environment where educators feel supported and healthy. These resources will help you share an overview of each module included in IDOE's newly released ***The Science of Happiness*** course, promoting teacher self-care.

Purpose:

Provide a short overview of what educators will learn through participation in each of the eight ***The Science of Happiness*** course modules and encourage participation in this optional professional development opportunity.

Directions:

- 1 Designate five-ten minutes of each of the next eight monthly/weekly staff meetings to share information from each of the course module one-pagers.
- 2 Provide time for discussion and reflection regarding information shared.
- 3 Encourage staff to enroll in IDOE's ***The Science of Happiness*** course for deeper learning and strategies for self-care. Participants will earn 45 Professional Growth Plan points upon completion.

If educators fail, Indiana fails. When educators are successful, Indiana is successful. There is no separation of dependence. In partnership with Butler University, IDOE proudly created The Science of Happiness course, designed to promote awareness of and provide strategies for educator well-being.



Based on the PERMA Model (Additional 'P' Added)

POSITIVE EMOTIONS & PERSONAL STRENGTHS	ENGAGEMENT	RELATIONSHIPS	MEANING	ACCOMPLISHMENT	PHYSICAL WELL-BEING: EXERCISE & SLEEP

PERMA is an acronym for a model of well-being put forth by Dr. Martin Seligman. **PERMA** is comprised of five building blocks of well-being and happiness.

Reasons to Enroll

- Research-based Concepts and Strategies to Impact Personal and Professional Wellness
- Self-Paced, Reflective Format for Low-Stress Completion
- Engaging Materials With Variety of Resource Formats
- Earn 45 Professional Growth Plan Points



Scan for more information, or to enroll in IDOE's
The Science of Happiness course.

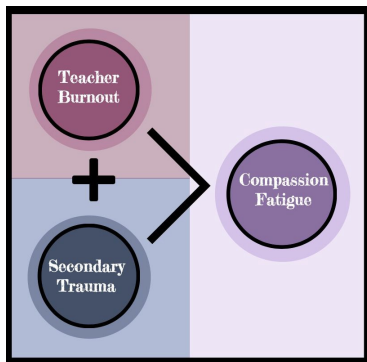
<https://www.doe.in.gov/sebw>



Module 1

What Could Be the Costs of Caring About Your Students?

Educators wear many hats throughout the day. The experience of feeling overwhelmed, overworked, and possibly even traumatized are common.



Some Teachers Experience:

- Secondary/Vicarious Trauma
- Teacher/Educator Burnout
- Compassion Fatigue
- Self-Care
- Compassion Satisfaction

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is used to describe all types of abuse, neglect, and other potentially traumatic experiences that occur to people under the age of 18.

ACEs Could Be Linked To:

- Risky Health Behaviors
- Chronic Health Conditions
- Low Life Potential
- Early Death



7FACTS

- 61 percent of educators report that work is always or often stressful.
- 46 percent of teachers report high daily stress, which compromises their health, sleep, quality of life, and teaching.
- 46.2 percent of Hoosier children have experienced one or more ACEs.





Module 2

Positive Emotions and Personal Strength

In everyone's life, there are successes and challenges. Learning a positive mindset is a key factor to happiness.

The Work-Life Balance

Sometimes “balancing” the two worlds of home and school can feel stressful, as if you are constantly juggling them both.

Ask Yourself:

- Has this happened in your life?
- How do you handle these situations?
- How can you strive for more *congruence* if this is taking place?

Focus on increasing positive emotions and mindset, so your personal strengths are natural patterns for thinking, feeling, and doing. This mindset will transition into your work-life balance of positive emotions and strengths as an educator.



FACTS

- A strength is an activity that you are good at and that gets you excited about doing and it gives you energy.
- A strength is an activity that makes you feel strong.
- The idea that work and life are separate worlds, to be balanced against one another, is not “truth.”





Module 3

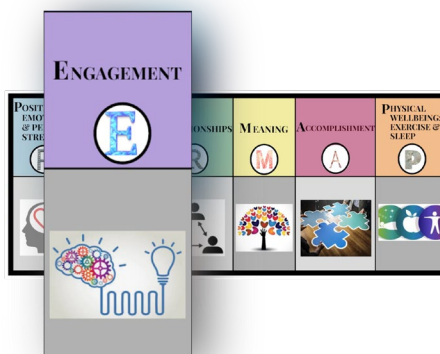
Engagement

When you are truly engaged in a situation, task, or project, you experience a ***state of flow***. Time seems to stop, you lose your sense of self as you concentrate intensely on the present challenge, and you are “in ***a zone***.”

Optimal State of Mind

Flow is a psychological experience, an optimal and desirable state that when experienced achieves total focus and performance.

Experiencing and practicing flow is intrinsically rewarding and encourages people back to an optimal state of well-being.



7FACTS

- Scientists believe that our brain has a built-in “negativity bias.”
- When we use energy on the negative, our engagement and positive emotions are interrupted.

Negative Thinking Patterns

Automatic Negative Thoughts or Cognitive Distortions are ANTS

ANTS are All or Nothing Thinking

- “Nothing ever goes my way.”
- “Everyone is a better teacher than me.”

Reshape Your Thinking!

1 Catch
the Thought

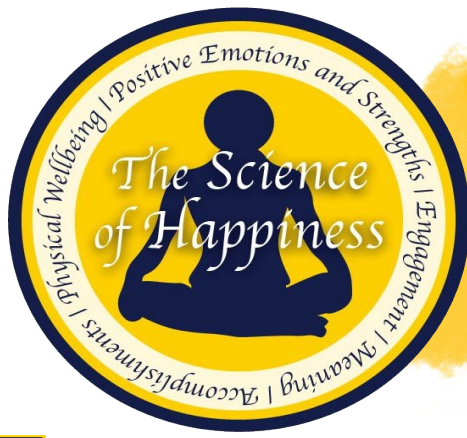
2 Check
the Thought
and Emotion

3 Correct
the Inaccurate
Findings



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<https://www.doe.in.gov/sebw>



Module 4

Relationships

Build a positive support system with others that support you,
not with people that fuel your stress.

Social Connections

A critical factor to our personal wellness and happiness is **social connection**. To have **social connection**, we must find authentic, genuine, and trusting relationships with others.

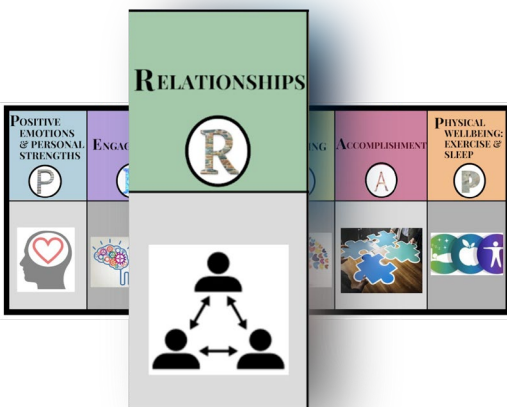
Examples of Social Connections at School:

- Teacher-Teacher
- Teacher-Student
- Teacher-Administrator

Show Gratitude

Showing gratitude is a way for people to recognize and appreciate what they have, rather than continually reaching for something new in hopes of being happier.

- Allow yourself to be fully present.
- Gratitudes will strengthen social connections and overall well-being.



7FACTS

- Neuroscience has gone even further, showing us that what humans need more than anything to survive is social connection.
- Happy people practice gratitude.
- No social connections can cause loneliness, which can negatively affect your health.



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Module 5

Meaning

People who have meaning and purpose in their lives are happier, feel more in control, and get more out of what they do. They also experience less stress, anxiety, and depression.

Finding Meaning

Meaning comes from serving a cause bigger than ourselves.

Meaning involves finding our purpose, what fulfills us, and what gives us a sense of direction and drive.

Practice:

- Deeply reflect and self-assess which activities, relationships, and values/beliefs bring you the most purpose and passion.



Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the awareness that emerges through purposeful attention in the present moment, and doing so in a non-judgmental and compassionate way.

Five Components of Mindfulness:

1. Pay Attention
2. Be in the Present
3. Be Non-Reactive
4. Be Non-Judgemental
5. Be Compassionate

7FACTS

- Several studies have found that mindfulness **increases positive emotions** while reducing negative emotions and stress.
- Research has found practicing mindfulness increases density of gray matter in the brain regions linked to learning, memory, emotion regulation, and **empathy**.





Module 6

Accomplishment

Feeling a sense of accomplishment means we have worked towards and have reached our goals, achieved mastery over a challenge, and had the self-motivation and perseverance to complete what we set out to do.

Three Steps to Developing Feelings of Accomplishment

1. **SET ACHIEVABLE GOALS** -- Within your goals, **create mini-goals** as small stepping stones to get you closer to your overall target. Remember to **celebrate and savor the small successes of the achievement of the mini-goals!**
2. **USE YOUR STRENGTHS** As you set goals, work toward goals, and master goals. As you savor accomplishments, **notice the strengths you have used most frequently.**
3. **WORK FROM a GROWTH MINDSET** -- It is important to remember that failure is the pathway to mastery and to **maintain a positive approach that embraces mistakes as part of the learning process;** ultimately leading to accomplishment.

7FACTS

- Accomplishments leave us feeling a sense of pride.
- Accomplishments are achieved by successfully overcoming obstacles.
- Accomplishments could be vicariously felt through the successes of your students, peers, etc.





Module 7

Physical Well-Being: Exercise, Nutrition, and Sleep

“Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live in.”

- Jim Rohn

Sleep

Studies show that a lack of sleep affects overall health and the social-emotional well-being of people.

Exercise

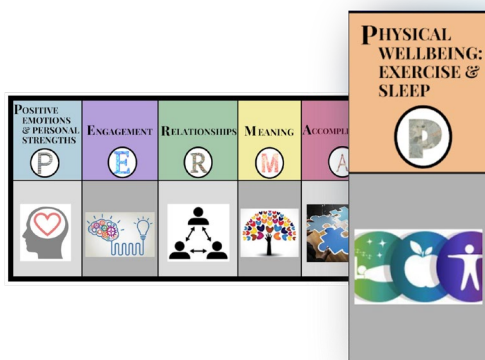
Exercise is an emotionally charged word. It can be received with pure excitement, energy, and enthusiasm, or with sighs, eyerolls, and quick angry whispers to colleagues.

Nutrition

Research continually shows healthy food choices has a positive impact on physical and mental/emotional health, and poor food choices have a negative effect.

How to positively impact your physical well-being

- Improve Sleep Habits
- Eat a Healthier Diet
- Exercise for at Least 30 Minutes Three Days Per Week



7FACTS

- 89 percent of parents and 75 percent of children have at least one electronic device in their bedrooms.
- Exercise decreases stress, social anxiety, and brain fog.
- More than 7,000 adults found that those with a positive well-being were 47% more likely to consume fresh fruits and vegetables than their less positive counterparts.



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